

SPEAKER NICHOL: Senator DeCamp, please, on the Marsh amendment. Senator DeCamp on the Marsh amendment.

SENATOR DECAMP: Mr. President, I would like to talk about three things in opposing the amendment. The three things are social policy, taxation policy and political reality. Social policy, I don't smoke, as I've mentioned. I think it is dumb. I think it is bad. I think it stinks. About 35 percent plus of the adult population of the United States are smokers; 25 percent, according to the numbers I get, of the adult population of the United States are what we call heavy smokers. They take very seriously, and watch very closely what we do. Is the purpose of this tax increase to stop smoking because it is bad, because it causes people to die? Is that the purpose? Nobody has yet mentioned that. I have to believe that is not the purpose. Why? Because if you use Senator Marsh's own arguments and numbers, the whole idea of increasing the taxes is based upon volume of smokers. You've got to have the same base of smokers and that huge population smoking to make the whole system fly to generate revenue. So the policy isn't to correct the evil, if you would, to stop smoking. Is the policy to cure cancer or treat diseases? Not one penny of all these millions is going for that purpose. A little bit of the existing tax is, almost nothing. But of this massive new multimillions none of it is going to cure the evil, so to speak, to cure the cancer. It is all going, simply, for revenue because we are short of revenue which gets us then to the next purpose, taxation policy. If you are going to tax "individual's vices", and we are going to call this a vice, I guess, and I think it is, although there are other vices too, there are a lot of vices. But if we are going to tax vices then let's kind of treat them a little bit equally. Why should the cigarette smoker be singled out more than any other individual? What about the guy that has the Jack Daniels on occasion, or a glass of beer? We are going with this tax, or with this proposal to put Nebraska right up there fighting for number one position in taxation of cigarettes. We are in the top, what, 18 now, and if we can get Shirley's amendment on, we'll be up there, I guess, in the top ten. I repeat, I'm not sure it is wise to keep doing nothing other than trying to be number one only in taxation if we can't make it in football first. We are number one, as you know, or fighting for that in our gasoline taxes. At least they are going to build roads which we neglected for so many